

## MEMORANDUM

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## MEMORANDUM FOR DR. KISSINGER

FROM: K. Wayne Smith, *KWS*

SUBJECT: Vietnamization Problems

INFORMATION  
January 21, 1971

The evidence continues to accumulate on possible deficiencies in our support for South Vietnamese forces under the Vietnamization program. While some of the sources have a vested interest in overstating the problem, the evidence does support those who maintain that we should be providing more support to RVNAF.

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While it is true that even under much more favorable income conditions in the mid-1960's RVNAF desertions were at roughly current levels per capita, it is hard to explain why they have not declined in the face of a vastly improved security situation that has resulted in a sharp drop in RVNAF KIA per capita. The roughly 40% decline in RVNAF real incomes over the last three years is almost certainly a prime reason for the GVN's continued failure to make significant progress toward solving the desertion problem.

It would take an act of faith to believe that RVNAF combat forces that suffer one-third losses annually through desertions can cope with a determined NVA threat after U.S. forces leave.

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You recall that the NSSM 99 study raised the issue of whether the U.S. should leave its forces in MR 3 rather than on the front lines in MR 1 as a measure to reduce casualties. Such a move would also be consistent with your statement that you would rather have 100% control over 60% of the country than 60% control over 100%. I do not believe we should rule out such an option in subsequent NSSM 99 work.

General Tri cited specific shortages such as the lack of heavy equipment (tank) transporters and a deficiency in spare parts for tracked vehicles (resulting in a 60% operating rate) and a shortage of helicopter support as obstacles to GVN main force self-sufficiency in MR 3.

While General Tri will probably never be satisfied with the equipment he has, some of his examples would seem to fall in the "necessities" category.

#### Conclusion

Vietnamization problems such as those raised above will be treated in the next stage of NSSM 99 now underway. Your signature on the Vietnamization memorandum I recently sent forward would provide important assistance to this effort.

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